

## Media Release



**bluffton**  
HEART OF THE LOWCOUNTRY

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August 21, 2018

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Additional Event Resources:

(Website): <http://www.clemson.edu/extension/carolinaclear/regional-consortiums/lsp/index.html>  
(Lowcountry Stormwater Partners)  
(Facebook): Town of Bluffton Government  
(Facebook): Lowcountry Stormwater Partners – We are Neighbors for Clean Water

30th Annual Beach Sweep/River Sweep Saturday, September 15

The Town of Bluffton, Lowcountry Stormwater Partners, South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium and the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources invite all greater Bluffton residents and business owners to participate in the 30th Annual Beach Sweep/River Sweep on Saturday, September 15 from 9 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. The event is held at the Oyster Factory Park on the May River (63 Wharf Street). This is the 30<sup>th</sup> year this statewide event has been held and the 11<sup>th</sup> year in which Bluffton has participated. Thousands of volunteers across the state participate annually in this event, which is South Carolina's largest one-day, volunteer, litter cleanup of beaches, marshes and waterways.

“Each year the Town hosts two opportunities to nurture Bluffton’s May River and be part of a community effort to protect the town’s most cherished natural resource,” Mayor Lisa Sulka said. “The May River Cleanup is held in April, which is the beginning of boating season, and the May River Sweep, held in September, is after the summer season. These events greatly contribute to the health of our river, our town and our community as hundreds come together to ensure our waterways and surrounding areas are free of debris. It is also a wonderful event to join your neighbors and celebrate the love of our town and river.”

The Town's Director of Engineering Bryan McIlwee said these events help create a sense of community as they educate residents about town and regional resources.

"The waterways of Beaufort County are unique, dynamic environments, rich in marine life and their livelihood depends on shared common public education." McIlwee said. "Together, we work with local residents and business owners to prevent litter and stormwater pollution, encourage individual action, and promote responsibility for environmental protection. The Town is very thankful for such an involved community."

#### Coffee /Lunch/Supplies/ (Limited) Kayaks Provided for Volunteers

The Town of Bluffton encourages all individuals, families, friends, schools, youth groups, civic groups, conservation groups and businesses to volunteer for a few hours to clean the river and roadsides, which drain to the river.

Corner Perk will be providing a cup of their May River Blend coffee before the event and the Hardeeville Walmart will provide free lunches to volunteers. Be Green Packaging, an event partner, is also supplying compostable dishware.

Event partners will provide all necessary supplies including gloves, bags, sunscreen, and water. Just bring yourself and wear comfortable clothes and appropriate shoes.

Litter pickup will be taking place around the Historic District and on the May River. Marshgrass Adventures, The Outside Foundation, Outside Hilton Head and local kayak club members will be assisting with cleanup efforts on the water. If you would like to participate with your own boat or kayak, please arrive by 8:30 a.m. to allow time for setup.

Each local volunteer becomes a "scientist" and records data as he or she writes down information about the type of debris they collect. This data is tabulated, added to South Carolina's data and is incorporated into the Ocean Conservancy's worldwide data. This cumulative data provides crucial information on the sources of litter so communities can better identify and target anti-litter education.

If you need more information about the event, please contact Beth Lewis, water quality program administrator, with the Town's Watershed Management Division at (843) 706-4559 or via email at [blewis@townofbluffton.com](mailto:blewis@townofbluffton.com). Registration is not necessary however; please notify Lewis if you are bringing a community group or organization so the event can plan for special projects and an adequate quantity of supplies.

#### Event Partners

The Town of Bluffton and the countywide environmental education arm, Lowcountry Stormwater Partners, thank all local and regional partners who make this event an annual success.

Partners include:

- Hardeeville Walmart (Store #2832)
- Corner Perk
- i2 Recycle
- Waste Management
- Marshgrass Adventures
- Outside Hilton Head
- The Outside Foundation
- Port Royal Sound Foundation
- Beaufort County Conservation District
- Coastal Conservation League
- Be Green Packaging
- Keep Beaufort County Beautiful
- The Beaufort County Solid Waste & Recycling Division
- Keep Beaufort County Beautiful
- Palmetto Pride
- Savannah Riverkeeper
- South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR)
- South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium
- Adams Outdoor Advertising.

In an effort to make the Town's cleanups as sustainable as possible, i2 Recycle will be recycling the suitable debris collected. Waste Management will be providing a waste disposal bin for items that cannot be recycled.

Since 1988, the South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium and the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources have organized this annual event. The Beach Sweep/River Sweep takes place in conjunction with the International Coastal Cleanup, coordinated by the Ocean Conservancy. The Ocean Conservancy tallies all the debris data from each location worldwide. The data helps those in charge of environmental protection to identify the sources of litter so they can make recommendations, which may help prevent and reduce the amount of litter polluting our waterways.

In addition to the Cleanup, several organizations, such as Lowcountry Stormwater Partners, the Port Royal Sound Foundation, and the Beaufort County Conservation District will have educational displays about how to improve water quality in our local watersheds, including the May River Watershed.

The Town of Bluffton will be providing free reusable grocery bags for volunteers and have educational information on the upcoming plastic bag ban ordinance, which goes into effect November 1, 2018.

About Lowcountry Stormwater Partners: Striving for healthy, fishable, swimmable waterways.

Neighbors for Clean Water initiative began as a project of the Town of Bluffton with the goal of educating and motivating residents to be responsible and do their part to clean up the May River and surrounding watersheds in greater Bluffton. The initiative began with support from the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control.

Recognizing the importance of having an education program that would share common goals and messages, Carolina Clear, The Town of Bluffton, Beaufort County, the Town of Hilton Head Island, the City of Beaufort, and the Town of Port Royal came together to form the Lowcountry Stormwater Partners – We are Neighbors for Clean Water. The objective is to reach and educate all of our citizens in Beaufort County and to continue our joint efforts to protect our precious waterways.

If you are interested in keeping up to date on the latest Lowcountry Stormwater Partners news, please follow our work on Facebook and sign-up for the Changing Tides, our monthly e-newsletter. Visit <http://www.clemson.edu/extension/carolinaclear/regional-consortiums/lsp/index.html> to learn more.

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